ARTICLES

OF

Visitation and Enquiry

Concerning matters

ECCLESIASTICAL:

EXHIBITED TO

The Ministers and Church-Wardens within the DIOCESS of

WORCESTER,

IN THE

TRIENNIAL VISITATION

OF THE

Right Reverend Father in God

WILLIAM

By Divine Permission, Lord Bishop of *WORCESTER*, 1687.

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The Oath to be Administred to the Church-Wardens of every Parish.

YOU shall Swear truly and faithfully to execute the Office of a Church-Warden within your Parish, and, according to the best of your Skill and Knowledge Present such Things and Persons as you know to be Presentable by the Ecclesiastical Laws of this Realm.

So help you God.

ARTICLES
OF
Visitation and Enquiry
WITHIN THE
DIOCESS
OF
WORCESTER.

TIT. I.

Concerning Churches and Chappels, with the Ornaments and Furniture thereunto belonging.

I. IS your Parish-Church or Chappel kept in good repair in all parts of it, with such cleanliness, decency and order, as becometh a house dedicated to the publick worship and service of God?

II. Hath any thing belonging to them, as Bells, Lead, &c. been sold and embezelled? When? and by whom?

III. Is there a Font of Stone with a good Cover to it, standing in a convenient place towards the lower part of the Church, for the Administration of Baptism? and is there in your Chancel a decent Communion-Table, with a fair Carpet of Silk, or fine Cloth, with another of fine Linnen, to spread thereon at the Administration of the Lords Supper? and have you a fair Communion-Cup, or Chalice with a Cover of Silver, and one or more Flagons of Silver, or Pewter belonging to that service?

IV. Have you in your said Church or Chappel a convenient Seat or Pew for your Minister to read Divine Service in? a Pulpit with a comely Cloth or Cushion for the same? a Bible of the last Translation in a large Volume, and two Books of Common-Prayer, one for the Minister, and the other for the Clerk, all well and substantially bound? have you likewise the Book of Homilies set forth by Authority? a Book of Canons and Constitutions Ecclesiastical? the Book of thirty nine Articles of Religion, and a printed Table of the Degrees wherein Marriage is Prohibited? have you also his Majesty's Proclamation commanded to be read yearly upon the Sunday before the Thirtieth day of January? and the Act for the Twenty Ninth of May, with the last Office for that day?

V. Have you a comely large Surplice, and other Ornaments for your Minister, according to his degree, to wear in his publick Administration, for outward decency and distinction?

VI. Have you a Book of Parchment, wherein are Registred the Names of all such Persons as are Married, Christned and Buried within your Parish?

Parish: and is the Transcript thereof yearly within a Month next after the 25. of March, brought into the Bishops Registry?

VII. Have you likewise another Book of Paper wherein to record Names and Licences of all such Strangers as are admitted at any time to Preach in your Church or Chappel: as also a third Book wherein to write down the Church-Wardens Accounts, and such sums of money as have been Collected in your Parish upon any Briefs that have come unto it: together with a strong Chest with Locks and Keys, wherein to keep the said Books, and all other the aforementioned Furniture in safe Custody?

TIT. II.

Concerning the Church-yard, the Houses, Glebe and Tyths belonging to the Church.

I. IS your Church-yard sufficiently fenced and kept from all annoyance? hath any person encroached upon the same, or cut down the trees therein?

II. Is the Mansion-house of your Minister with all other Houses thereunto belonging, kept in good repair: have any of them been pulled down or defaced: have any encroached upon the Land thereto belonging, or fell'd the trees thereon growing?

III. Have you a perfect Terrier of all Glebe-Lands, Gardens, Orchards, and Tenements belonging to your Parsonage or Vicarage: also a particular List of such Pensions, Tythes, Rents, Customs, and other yearly profits within or without your Parish, as belong thereto: Are any of them

them withheld from your Minister, and by whom? and are there Copies of such Terrier, and List in Parchment sent into the Bishops Registry?

IV. Have any of the ancient Glebe-Lands belonging to your Parsonage or Vicarage been taken away, or alienated by Lease, Sale or Exchange, without Licence from the Ordinary, and the free consent of the Incumbent? have any Inclosures been made in your Parish to the detriment of the Church?

TIT. III.

Concerning Ministers.

I. IS your Minister Episcopally Ordain'd Priest or Deacon according to the Laws of the Church of England?

II. Is he defamed or suspected to have obtained either his Benefice or Orders by any Simoniacal Compact?

III. Hath he been legally Instituted and Inducted in his Benefice? and did he within two Months after his Induction, publickly in the Church, upon some Sunday or Holy-day in the time of Divine Service read the thirty nine Articles of the Church of England, and there publickly declare his assent thereunto?

IV. Hath he any Ecclesiastical Benefice, or doth he supply any other Church besides his own? Is he constantly resident among you, or is he at any time for any long season absent? Hath he a settled Curate to assist him in his absence? Is that Curate an able, discreet and conformable person, Licenced by the Bishop, residing and attending only

other

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ly upon that Cure? and hath he a competent allowance?

V. Doth your Parson, Vicar, or Curate, read the daily Morning and Evening Service, with the second Service (as it is prescribed) on Sundays and holy-days? doth he read also the Litany on Sundays, as likewise on Wednesdays and Fridays? And doth he in reading the Services, and in the administration of the holy Sacraments, celebration of Marriage, Churching of Women after Childbirth, Visitation of the Sick, Burial of the Dead, and pronouncing Gods Commination against impenitent Sinners, use the form and words prescribed in the Book of Common-Prayer, without any addition, omission, or alteration of the same? and doth he use all such Rites and Ceremonies in all parts of Divine Service as are appointed in the said Book.

VI. Doth your Minister at the reading and celebrating the Divine Offices in your Church or Chappel, constantly wear the Surplice together with such other Scholastical habit as is suitable to his Degree?

VII. Doth your Minister give you notice of, and duely observe, holy-days, Festivals or Feasts, with other solemn times, as Ember and Rogation weeks, according as it is by Laws and Canons of this Church appointed?

VIII. Hath your Minister been Licensed to officiate by the Bishop of this Diocess, or either of the two Universities? Doth he, being thus Licensed, diligently read Divine Service, and Preach every Lords Day in your Church or Chappel, unless hindred by sickness or reasonable absence? And in such cases, doth he procure some lawful Minister to read

Prayers,

Prayers, to Preach, and perform other Ministerial duties?

IX. Doth your Minister constantly on Sundays in the afternoon immediately after the second Lesson, diligently instruct the Youth of your Parish in the Church Catechism? and doth he prepare and present them being so instructed, to be Confirm'd by the Bishop? and doth he endeavour to instruct the ignorant, reclaim the vitious, and rectifie erroneous Judgments?

X. Doth your Minister celebrate the Sacrament of the Lords Supper so often every year that every Parishioner may receive thrice at least? and doth he repel those that ought not to be admitted, giving an account of them to the Bishop?

XI. Is he ready to visit the Sick, and to Baptize Infants that are in danger of death? Is there any Infant or other Person by his default unbaptized in your Parish? Doth he use to Baptize any without Godfathers or Godmothers, ~~or admit either of the Parents to be Godfather or Godmother to their own Child~~? or doth he Baptize any at home, except in case of imminent danger?

XII. ~~Doth your Minister instruct his Parishioners~~ to be loyal and obedient to the King? and hath he at any time instilled any fears and jealousies into his Auditors, so as to excite them to disobedience or murmuring against their Superiors?

XIII. Hath he presum'd to Marry any persons in private houses? or such, as being under age, have not the consent of their Parents or Guardians, or without Banns first published on three Sundays or Holy-days in the Church? or any other hours than between eight and twelve in the morning, unless he had a Licence so to do?

XIV. Is

XIV. Is your Minister conformable to the holy Rule and great Example of our Lord Jesus Christ? is he a man of a studious, sober, peaceable and exemplary Life, for Sanctity, Charity, and Industry in his Calling? is he grave, modest, and regular in his outward demeanor without vanity in his hair, and his Apparel such as may distinguish him from the Laity, as the Canons of the Church require? is his discourse and whole Conversation becoming a Minister of the Gospel, who remembers the great Account he must give for his own and other mens souls committed to his Care? or is he in any kind whatsoever disorderly and scandalous?

TIT. IV.

Concerning Parishioners.

I. IS there any Person in your Parish that lyeth under any common fame, or any vehement suspition of Adultery, Fornication, Incest or Prophaneness? Are there any common Drunkards, Swearers, or Blasphemers of Gods Name, or revilers of his holy Word? Are any noted for railers, unclean and filthy talkers, or sowers of sedition, or live in discord and contention?

II. Do any of your Parish upon Sundays ~~or holy-days~~ follow their bodily or ordinary Labour, or permit their Servants so to do? Are any Shops kept open, or Wares sold, or do any Vintners, Inn-Keepers or Victuallers, and sellers of Ale and Beer, suffer any persons to tipple or game in their houses upon those days?

III. Doth every person resorting to your Church or Chappel, behave themselves decently & reverently during the Administration of divine Ordinances?

IV. Are there any of your Parish who refuse to pay their Easter Offerings and other duties to your Minister? or to pay rates assessed on them for the repair and provisions of the Church?

V. Are there any Wills or Testaments of persons dead in your Parish that be yet unproved? or any Goods administred without a due grant from the Ordinary? Did any dying in your Parish, or elsewhere leave any Legacy to your Church or Chappel, or to the use of the Poor, or to any other pious and charitable purposes? What were those Legacies? and how have they been bestowed?

VI. Do you know, or have you heard of any in your Parish, who, having the Presentation of an Ecclesiastical Living, hath made any Simoniacal Compact, or gain thereby either in money or by reserve of any part of the Tythes, or Glebe belonging to that Benefice? 10.

VII. Have any Pews or Seats been erected in your Church or Chappel without leave from the Ordinary? Is there any strife or contention about Seats in the Church? Have any occasioned Ryot, Clamour, or fighting in the Church at any time?

TIT. V.

Concerning Parish Clerks and Sextons.

I. HAve you belonging to your Church or Chappel a Parish Clerk of honest life and conversation? and doth he perform his duty in reading,

reading, writing and singing? Is he chosen by your Minister? And doth he duly attend him in all divine Services at your Church? And are his wages duly paid unto him?

II. Doth he or your Sexton take care of the Church to keep it lockt, and clean, to open the doors, and to ring the Bells in due time, to call the people to the worship of God?

TIT. VI.

Concerning Hospitals and Alms-Houses, Schools, Schoolmasters, Physicians, Chirurgeons, and Midwives.

I. What Hospital, Alms-house, or Free-School, hath been founded in your Parish? Are they so order'd in their Revenue and use as the Founders appointed, and the Law of the Land allows?

II. What Schoolmaster private or publick is there in your Parish? Is he Licensed by the Bishop? Doth he teach his Scholars in the Catechism of Religion set forth by Authority? Doth he cause them upon Sundays and Holy days, orderly to repair to your Church or Chappel, and see that they behave themselves there quietly and reverently during the time of Divine Service and Sermon?

III. Do any in your Parish practice Physick, Chirurgery or Midwifery without Licence from the Ordinary?

TIT. VII.

Queries to be put to the Minister concerning the Church wardens.

I. ARe the Church-wardens of your Parish yearly and duly chosen by the joint consent of the Minister and Parishioners: or one of them by the Minister, and the other by the Parishioners?

II. Have the former and last Church-wardens given up their Accounts duly to the Parish, and deliver'd up to the succeeding Church-wardens the money remaining in their hands together with all other things belonging to your Church or Chappel?

III. Do they suffer any to stand idle, or talk together in the Church Porch? or walk in the Church or Church-yard during the time of Prayer, Preaching, or other sacred Offices?

IV. Do they against every Communion appointed in your Church or Chappel provide a sufficient quantity of fine white Bread and of good Wine, according to the number of Communicants?

V. Have they (the Church-wardens) who are to give in a true answer unto all these Articles of Enquiry in their several Titles, taken sufficient time to draw up their Presentment at home before they come to the Visitation? And have they therein consulted with you their Minister, for your faithful assistance?

The Ministers of each Parish, whose Duty it is to endeavour the Suppression of all Irregularities and Prophaneness, if they see the Church-wardens negligent to present notorious Crimes, may and ought to do it themselves.

FINIS.